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Tuesday, February 21, 2023

Honorable Aisha Gomez, Chair
State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Gomez and House Tax Committee Members:

On behalf of the Minnesota Chapter American College of Emergency Physicians, which represents emergency room physicians across the state of Minnesota, we would offer these comments about HF: 1487 (Reyer) that would prevent hospitals from using revenue recapture to help with unpaid hospital bills. Revenue recapture is a collection mechanism that is used by some safety-net hospitals and ambulance services as a last resort after all attempts to contact patients have failed.

Emergency rooms are unlike the rest of the health care system in one very important aspect. We cannot turn anyone away services for failure to pay.

The Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) is a federal law that requires anyone coming to an emergency department to be stabilized and treated, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay, but since its enactment in 1986 has remained an unfunded mandate. This means that as part of having an emergency infrastructure, the state needs to help support its hospitals instead.

To carry out this mission, hospitals need the ability to collect unpaid medical debts from individuals who have the resources. We urge you to not remove this funding that contributes to the financial stability of hospitals without first replacing it with other funding. To not do so places an even greater strain on the entities providing critical care for patients and serving communities. We feel strongly that an uncompensated care pool or other options to provide continued financial support of the entire system is explored.

Thank you for your consideration and we stand ready to help solve these problems.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors
Minnesota Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians